

OPERA HOUSE BUILDINGS IN NEBRASKA

Reconnaissance Survey
FINAL REPORT

PRESENTED TO THE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
OF THE
NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BY

D. LAYNE EHLERS
AND CHRISTIAN H. EHLERS

July 1, 1987

ITINERANT AND LOCAL ENTERTAINMENT AS REPRESENTED BY
EXTANT NEBRASKA OPERA HOUSES BUILT WITHIN THE STATE
DURING THE PERIOD 1867-1917

--THE OHBIN PROJECT--

Final Report
for the
Reconnaissance Survey

Presented to

David Murphy
Joni Gilkerson
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Historic Preservation Office
Nebraska State Historical Society

by

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SUPPLEMENT A

Preliminary Inventory

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Recommended for Intensive Survey

Thorps Opera House, David City, Butler County
Lodgepole Opera House, Lodgepole, Cheyenne County
ZCBJ/VFW Opera House, Clarkson, Colfax County
Pace Opera House, Chadron, Dawes County
Army Theatre, Fort Robinson, Dawes County
Allen's Opera House, Cozad, Dawson County
Love-Larson Opera House, Fremont, Dodge County
Schneider's Opera House, Snyder, Dodge County
Creighton Orpheum Theatre, Omaha, Douglas County
The Auditorium, Geneva, Fillmore County
Hampton/IOOF Opera House, Hampton, Hamilton County
Anna C. Diller Opera House, Diller, Jefferson County
Tecumseh Opera House, Tecumseh, Johnson County
Pospisil Theatre, Bloomfield, Knox County
ZCBJ Opera House, Verdigre, Knox County
Martha Ellen Auditorium, Central City, Merrick County
MacLay/New Opera House, Auburn, Nemaha County
Lawrence Opera House, Lawrence, Nuckolls County
Review Opera House, Dunbar, Otoe County
Steinauer Opera House, Steinauer, Pawnee County
Table Rock Opera House, Table Rock, Pawnee County
Gehling's Theatre, Falls City, Richardson County
Warren's Opera House, Friend, Saline County
Plains Theatre, Rushville, Sheridan County
IOOF Hall & Opera House, Bladen, Webster County
Clem's Opera House, Gresham, York County

Limited Integrity

Butte Opera House, Butte, Boyd County
The Palace, Long Pine, Brown County
Clay Center Opera House, Clay Center, Clay County
Sutton Opera House, Sutton, Clay County
Scribner/Soll Brothers Opera House, Scribner, Dodge Co.
Uehling Opera House, Uehling, Dodge County
Perkins Opera House, Maywood, Frontier County
Arapahoe Opera House, Arapahoe, Furnas County
Oshkosh Opera House, Oshkosh, Garden County
McIntyre Opera House, Wolbach, Greeley County
Orleans Opera House, Orleans, Harlan County
Majestic Theatre, Fairbury, Jefferson County
New Opera House, Tilden, Madison County
Cash's/Arends Opera House, Talmadge, Otoe County
Monson/Morrison's Opera House, Osceola, Polk County
Kovanda's Opera House, Weston, Saunders County
Civic Theatre, Hay Springs, Sheridan County
Ashton Opera House, Ashton, Sherman County
DeMerritt's Opera House, Alexandria, Thayer County
The Auditorium, Carleton, Thayer County
Red Cloud Opera House, Red Cloud, Webster County
McCool Opera House, McCool Junction, York County

Extensive Deterioration

Harsin/Lyons Opera House, Lyons, Burt County
Wood Lake Opera House, Wood Lake, Cherry County
Beemer Opera House, Beemer, Cuming County
Priel's Opera House, Overton, Dawson County
Riverton Opera House, Riverton, Franklin County
Daudt Opera House, Scotia, Greeley County
Cole's Opera House, Culbertson, Hitchcock County
Wallace Opera House, Wallace, Lincoln County
Damme's Opera House, Lorton, Otoe County
Rathbun Opera House, Shelby, Polk County
Matheson Building, Pilger, Stanton County

Exterior Integrity Only

Hargleroad Theatre, Holstein, Adams County
Neligh Auditorium, Neligh, Antelope County
Phelan's Opera House, Alliance, Box Butte County
Abel Brothers Opera House, Miller, Buffalo County
Meisner's/Hostetler Opera House, Shelton, Buffalo Co.
Lund's Opera House, Oakland, Burt County
Philpot Opera House, Weeping Water, Cass County
Laurel Auditorium, Laurel, Cedar County
Laurel Opera House, Laurel, Cedar County
Quigley Opera House, Valentine, Cherry County

Exterior Integrity Only, cont'd.

Edgar Opera House/Lyric Theatre, Edgar, Clay County
The Auditorium, West Point, Cuming County
Temple Theatre, Broken Bow, Custer County
Nelson's/Chadron Opera House, Chadron, Dawes County
Gem Theatre, Gothenberg, Dawson County
Smith's Opera House, Lexington, Dawson County
Ponca/New Opera House, Ponca, Dixon County
Bennington Opera House, Bennington, Douglas County
The Auditorium, Exeter, Fillmore County
The Ramona Opera House, Hildreth, Franklin County
M.W.A. Opera House, Cortland, Gage County
Terry's Opera House, Wolbach, Greeley County
Liederkrantz Hall, Grand Island, Hall County
Michelson Theatre, Grand Island, Hall County
Moore's Opera House, Wood River, Hall County
Palace Grand Theatre, Palisade, Hitchcock County
Page Opera House, Page, Holt County
Boelus Opera House, Boelus, Howard County
Elba Opera House, Elba, Howard County
Steele Opera House, Fairbury, Jefferson County
Hostettler's/Schaper's Opera House, Minden, Kearney Co.
Norman Opera House, Norman, Kearney County
Crofton Opera House, Crofton, Knox County
The Auditorium, Hickman, Lancaster County
Keith Theatre, North Platte, Lincoln County
Heinz Opera House, Madison, Madison County
Stuart's Opera House, Madison, Madison County
Opelt Opera House, Brownville, Nemaha County
Superior Opera House, Superior, Nuckolls County
Holdrege Opera House, Holdrege, Phelps County
Plainview Opera House, Plainview, Pierce County
Pawnee Theatre, Columbus, Platte County
Sears' Opera House, Ashland, Saunders County
Mitchell Opera House, Mitchell, Scottsbluff County
Morrill Opera House, Morrill, Scottsbluff County
Marquis Opera House, Scottsbluff, Scottsbluff County
Queen's Theatre, Scottsbluff, Scottsbluff County
Pfister's Opera House, Rushville, Sheridan County
Bruning Opera House, Bruning, Thayer County
Weiser/Warrington Opera House, Pender, Thurston County
Walthill Opera House, Walthill, Thurston County
Nobe's/York Opera House, York, York County

Other

LaBounty Opera House, Farnam, Dawson County
Hubbell Opera House, Hubbell, Thayer County

Lack Integrity

St. Edward's Opera House, St. Edward, Boone County
Elm Creek Opera House, Elm Creek, Buffalo County
Hasemeier's Opera House, Louisville, Cass County
Columbian Opera House, Fairfield, Clay County
Hyannis Opera House, Hyannis, Grant County
Bartenbach's Opera House, Grand Island, Hall County
Giltner Auditorium, Giltner, Hamilton County
St. Paul's Opera House, St. Paul, Howard County
Hawke's Opera House/Standard Th., Neb. City, Otoe Co.
Union/Syracuse Opera House, Syracuse, Otoe County
Osceola Auditorium, Osceola, Polk County
Stromsburg Opera House, Stromsburg, Polk County
Milford Opera House, Milford, Seward County
Gem Theatre, Loup City, Sherman County

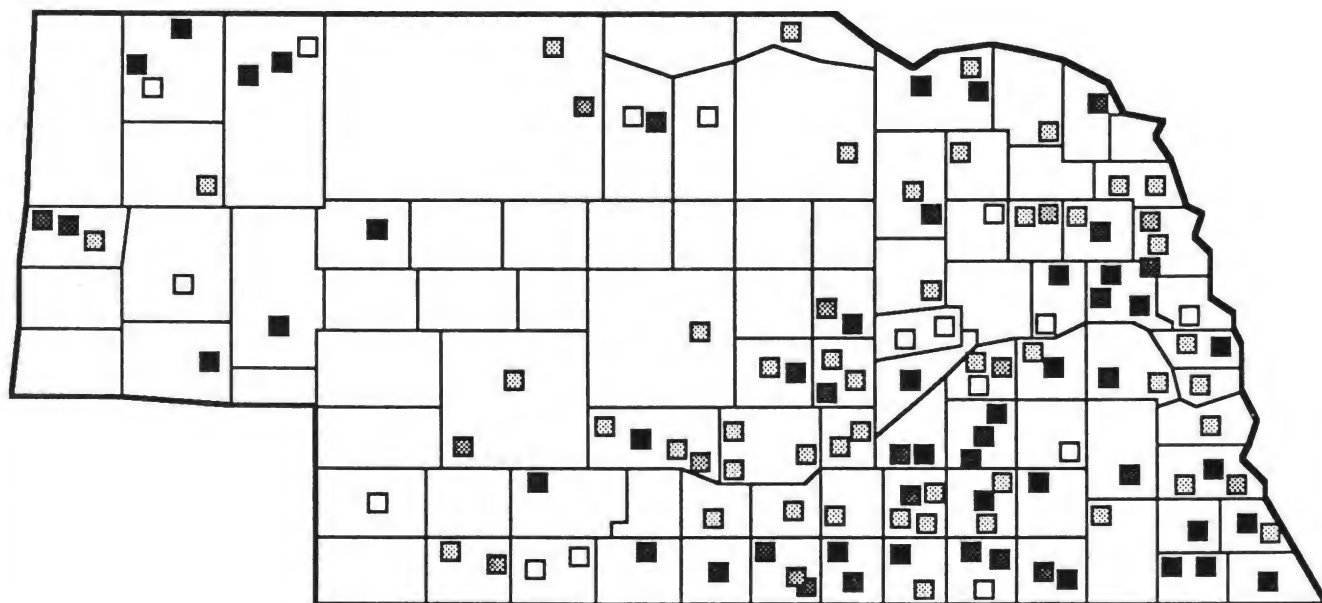
Not Surveyed

McClain's/Elgin Opera House, Elgin, Antelope County
Krause/Union Opera House, Hartington, Cedar County
Wynot Opera House, Wynot, Cedar County
Imperial Opera House, Imperial, Chase County
Fenske's Opera House, Lodgepole, Cheyenne County
Syndicate/Crawford Opera House, Crawford, Dawes County
I.O.O.F. Hall, Cozad, Dawson County
Sun Theatre, Gothenberg, Dawson County
Bijou Dream Theatre, Fremont, Dodge County
Geneva Opera House, Geneva, Fillmore County
Norfolk Auditorium, Norfolk, Madison County
Donelson Theatre, Central City, Merrick County
Miller Opera House, Bridgeport, Morrill County
Genoa Opera House, Genoa, Nance County
Sheaff/Cole's Opera House, Fullerton, Nance County
I.O.O.F. Auditorium, Polk, Polk County
Pearl Theatre, Shelby, Polk County
Masonic Temple Opera House, McCook, Red Willow County
Bussinger's Opera House, Bassett, Rock County
Empress Theatre, Gordon, Sheridan County
Swigert's Opera House, Gordon, Sheridan County
I.O.O.F. Opera House, Arlington, Washington County

Nebraska

Opera House Buildings

Reconnaissance Survey of Communities



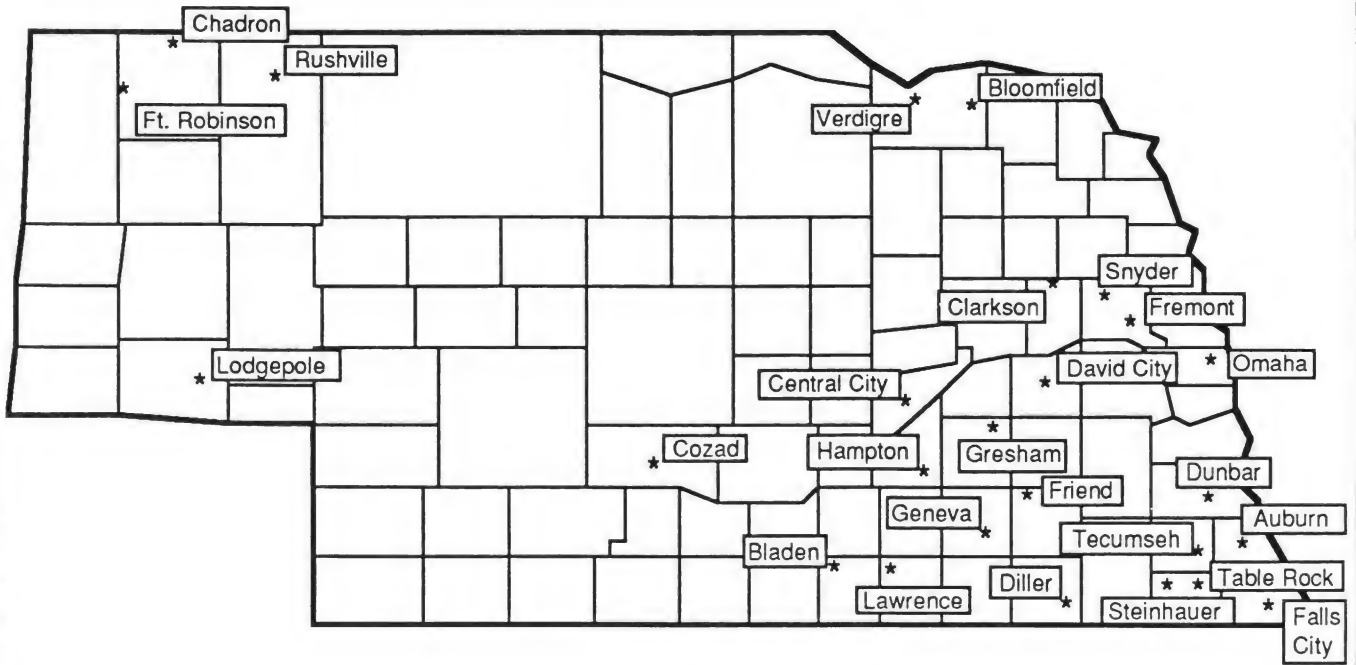
- Recommended for intensive survey.
- Interior and exterior integrity (extent varies).
- ▣ Interior integrity only.
- ▤ Structure extant, no integrity.
- Exterior integrity only.

Compiled by D. Ehlers, July 1987.

Nebraska

Opera House Buildings

Intensive Level Survey



HISTORIC CONTEXT

Outline of Historic Context

Introduction

The term "opera house," as used generically by more than 325 communities across Nebraska, seldom referred to an elaborate theatre furnished in a grand manner, offering the best-known names in professional entertainment circles. Instead, it often was a fancy monicker attached to a multifunction community hall which included a raised stage, found in Nebraska's emerging urban communities during the fifty years following statehood. As towns and cities established themselves with hotels, livery stables, saloons, physicians, lawyers, general mercantiles, barber shops, and the like, life became less primitive for the hardy Nebraskans who made up the citizenry. The railroads arrived with immigrants and eastern settlers coming to swell the ranks, taking away produce from the rich Nebraska grain fields and ranchlands, bringing income to buy once-forgotten conveniences. Distances once covered in days could be traveled in hours. Connections with the rest of the country and even major world capitals were no further than the nearest depot.

Modern machines compressed the workday of farmers, townsmen, and their womenfolk into reasonable lengths; leisure time became more than a Sunday morning daydream. Former pioneers, now citizens of established towns, discovered a need for a gathering place to hold dances, home

talent plays, band concerts, high school commencements, and other community events. The title "opera house," usually tacked on to the name of the owner or the town, was given to the combination theatre-hall which emerged to fill this need. Although these theatres had stages complete with proscenium arches, trap doors, dressing rooms, and footlights, and many had balconies and ornate facades patterned after famous New York or Chicago opera houses, few of these establishments saw operas throughout their productive years; most offered professional entertainment on an infrequent basis, but all saw vigorous use for local functions, including such diverse activities as roller skating, basketball, and meetings of fraternal groups. The opera houses helped create a sense of community in young towns well enough established to have time and energy for mass leisure activities.

Study Validity

Although the buildings which housed the facilities loosely termed "opera houses" during the fifty years following statehood represent the material manifestations of our past culture, or technofacts, it is the sociofacts of their original reason for existence which make the study of opera house buildings and related artifacts across the state so viable. The ravages of time dictate that those structures which have managed to preserve their historical integrity should be recognized for the important contribution such edifices made to their times.

Many of the most imposing of Nebraska's opera houses, those with national recognition during the opera house era, have disappeared under the double-edged plow of urban renewal. Still, the sheer quantity of former opera houses which remain scattered throughout the smaller communities across our state make this a reasonable subject of study, one which must be accomplished soon due to natural deterioration of such structures by time and elements. Opera houses represented the focus of many community-wide activities and entertainments during the fifty years following statehood, much as movie theatres and civic auditoriums do in our modern era. The gamut of offerings in the opera houses ranged from great stage artists such as Edwin Booth and Sarah Bernhardt, to important speakers like William Jennings Bryan, to New York stage productions, to musical performers and opera, to high school commencements, roller skating, and community dances. These edifices were focal points for leisure activity during their heyday, and thus it is the social importance of the opera house to its time which dictates that any technical remains--buildings, scenery, theatre seats, programs and posters, ledges, etc.--be recorded and, where possible, preserved.

Qualifying Statement

The scope of study for the OHBIN survey falls under the general cultural component of entertainment. The generic topic for this study is theatres, while the specific theme is opera houses. The geographic scale of study is the entire state of Nebraska. Over 500 edifices were identified

and tracked down, with field research at the sites of those 127 opera houses retaining varying degrees of integrity. Well over a thousand manhours have been devoted to this reconnaissance phase, which has concerned itself more with bricks and mortar than with reasons behind the rise, life span, and demise of these lively hubs of community life. Few paragraphs are given over to opera houses in books or centennial publications. Any meaningful concepts about these institutions will be developed gradually through the painstaking assimilation of microfilm research of local and county newspapers of the time, as well as national theatrical publications and general reading on the development of the towns. Time for this research has been set aside as part of the forthcoming intensive study. For these reasons, only general comments regarding the historic context are included in this final report of the reconnaissance survey.

Trends in Area Settlement and Development

Since opera houses, without exception, developed in urban areas, the story of the growth of towns and cities across Nebraska is also the background for the history of these theatres. When towns began, the citizens had little time for leisure activities; existence was eked out through backbreaking toil in sod houses and log structures. Gradually, though, following the Homestead Act which brought an influx of new farmers and townbuilders in the 1870s and

1880s to Nebraska, and the arrival of the railroads to smaller communities, life became less of a struggle. Communities began to develop a sense of self as schools were started and law and order settled the frontier chaos. The railroads brought news of the outside world in a much shorter time and made practical the importing of not only life-easing inventions to divest life of some of its drudgery, but professional entertainment from the glittering worlds of New York and Europe. Citizens with time on their hands advocated erecting opera houses so that towns could entice famous names to intrigue the populace with glimpses of a glamorous lifestyle.

Architecture, Construction, Technology or Craftsmanship

Local entrepreneurs were quick to sense not only the civic good will but fiscal benefits that would accrue to those individuals who took the initiative to build opera houses and import respectable, if not always top-drawer, talent to tread the boards. Businessmen with profitable establishments, realizing the benefits of brick from recently opened local kilns over more flammable wood, picked up on the idea of building two-story structures rather than one, utilizing the upper space for a fine theatre, often with a balcony, plus several meeting rooms or offices which could be rented out to generate more income from the property. Fraternal organizations such as the Z.C.B.J. and I.O.O.F. recognized the practicality of building a combination lodge and community building.

As the twentieth century began, town fathers turned to the idea of first-floor auditoriums which offered two advantages over second-floor opera houses. First, since they were on the ground floor, the dangers of fire in terms of loss of life and serious property damage were minimized. Second, since access was easier and lavatory facilities closer, ground-floor auditoriums were more attractive for functions such as basketball, commencements, dances, etc. These small auditoriums were the precursors of modern municipal auditoriums like Devaney Sports Complex and Pershing Auditorium in Lincoln.

Current research indicates that, except for the grand palaces modeled after major metropolitan opera houses in New York and San Francisco, it is likely that architectural style and formal plans drawn up by an architect were not a factor for most opera houses. A best-guess premise is that these vernacular structures used local or regional talent as builders. The same holds true for at least some of the scenery. Nebraskans are noted for frugality; fancy architectural drawings and professionally painted scenery might seem like a frivolity to people whose prosperity varied from year to year. Adjectives describing extant buildings include sturdy, solid--and nondescript. Those which show significant deterioration suffer from an ailment common to all structures erected in the days of flat tar roofs--water damage.

Cultural Interests of Local Communities

Cultural interests across Nebraska varied widely during the opera house era, just as they do now, although live theatre was attended in percentages more representative of our modern motion pictures than theatre itself. Audiences appreciated nineteenth century superstars of the stage such as Bernhardt, Booth, Lind, and Modjeska in the same way that modern moviegoers follow the antics of rock, television, movie, and sports personalities, although those glittering personalities of yesterday were not subjected to the media hype of a world heading toward the twenty-first century at a computer-enhanced pace.

Professional entertainment included not only the superstars who toured with their own companies, taking their prize roles on the road from September through May, but road shows of New York stage plays. Major opera companies put together traveling ensembles to present important operatic presentations like The Mikado before audiences across the country. Some troupes even carried their own scenery, although most theatres were expected to have certain obligatory sets in-house for the use of traveling players. Quality of these troupes varied widely, evident in the yellow reviews of newspapers of the day.

Not all professional entertainment in Nebraska towns was restricted to the opera houses. Circuses and chautauquas set up tents outside of town in someone's unused field; speakers like William Jennings Bryan and Susan B.

Antony and Magic Lantern shows often held forth in churches. Medicine shows harangued passers-by on town boardwalks.

Local entertainment in the opera houses varied widely. Dances, home talent plays, band concerts and glee club evenings were common. High schools used the auditoriums of opera houses for all large-group functions, such as commencements and plays, until permanent school structures replaced the one-room versions erected during the towns' pre-growth years. Literary societies, town boards, and fraternal organizations held meetings on the premises. Basketball was common.

Competition was common among opera houses. While fiercest in Lincoln and Omaha which regularly had at least two thriving opera houses from the 1870s until World War I, the presence of two such buildings was not unusual in smaller communities. Generally, one opera house predominated in terms of quality use, though.

Demise of the Opera House

Although a number of the opera houses and auditoriums functioned well into the 1920s and 1930s in smaller Nebraska communities, the opera house era ended with America's entry into the Great War in 1917. Several possibilities emerge as likely culprits. First, by 1917 movies were common even in small communities and a new kind of theatre was drawing the crowds. Although opera houses had been the logical location to show the earliest silent movies to a stunned populace, few converted wholly to movie palaces. One reason for this

is that civic officials recognized the serious problems associated with second-floor public gathering places and such structures were discouraged. These inherent dangers constituted a second cause of the decline of the opera house as a hub of community life.

Another reason was the decline in the number of traveling players. Expenses were difficult to meet as railroads cut back on special theatrical rates and too many fifth-rate companies gave all but the biggest names a bad odor. Most traveling entertainers during the 1920s and 1930s, seeking to offer something different to audiences still under the spell of moving pictures in a dark auditorium, took their act outside and put it under a tent, competing with the chautauquas for the crowds, offering premiums, glitz, bawdy or barnyard humor and showmanship in the place of "culture."

Automobiles, faster trains, and returning Doughboys who had tasted travel all contributed to evolving demographics and aided the opera houses' last days, as well. By 1917, even the grand palaces in Lincoln and Omaha had deteriorated into vaudeville houses, offering "family entertainment." The raucous pace of life patterns of the 1920s did not include the opera house as a viable entity, the functions served by the buildings were gradually farmed out to city and high school auditoriums, and the once elegant idea of live theatre in every town of any importance across the state faded gracefully into the world of the Good Old Days.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research Design

Objective

The objective of this reconnaissance study of extant Nebraska opera houses was to physically visit each site and make appropriate identification of the former opera house properties, including an adequate number of photographic views and site mapping. This identification was to provide the basis for a decision to pursue an intensive-level survey of the structures, designed to result in eligibility for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for those properties maintaining sufficient historical integrity.

Property Type

The general property type for this study was the opera house block, although most of the structures are no longer used for any type of theatrical performance; most are private or limited access only. All of the sites are in the middle of or on the edges of the original downtown area of the town. For those on the fringes, further research would indicate if the configuration of the downtown area has changed since the opera house era.

The majority of the former opera houses, 82, were located on the second floor of a building, usually brick, with a retail or other public business such as a bank on the ground floor. This allowed the owners to earn income from the ground floor and, often, from meeting rooms and offices

on the same floor as the theatre auditorium, permitting the auditorium space to remain vacant for varying periods of time. Auditorium space could also be rented out for civic functions.

A further 64 properties were ground floor opera houses. These were used as community halls with removable chairs in many cases, so that the space could also be used for dances, graduations, meeting halls, etc. Several of these did have permanent seating, though. Six additional extant opera houses were the formal or "grand palace" type of structure, imitating the important opera houses on the Coasts, in Chicago, and in Europe.

Current use of extant structures varies from the Creighton Orpheum Theatre in Omaha, an example of complete restoration and use as a fine arts theatre, to the Matheson Building in Pilger, a vacant hulk of a building which has passed beyond the point of useability. Those with extant interiors often function as theatres, community buildings, or storage, while those opera houses now gutted or remodeled were frequently converted to apartments or fraternal space at some time. Many of these also serve as storage for their current owners. Many have been condemned because of fire hazards, physical deterioration from water damage, or structural deterioration.

Preliminaries

Prior to submission of the original proposal for the OHBIN study, the Principal Investigator had compiled a

county-by-county listing of all opera houses in the State of Nebraska which, during the period 1867-1917, were listed in either the Nebraska Gazetteer or the various issues of Julius Cahn's Theatrical Guides. This compilation was based on a community-by-community alphabetical survey in an unpublished 1978 manuscript by Alan Nielsen of the University of Nebraska, An Historical Survey of Opera Houses and Legitimate Theatres Built in the State of Nebraska Between 1865 and 1917. A total of 546 opera houses were accounted for. Responses from county historical societies and other individuals in the field to requests for information on these opera houses by the Principal Investigator yielded results on the status of 313 of those original 546 structures, 103 of which were reported as extant.

The Principal Investigator had also researched 1879-1895 issues of the New York Dramatic Mirror for names of professional actors and companies which performed across Nebraska. Further work remains in this area, as well as similar research in the New York Clipper. Both publications were similar in function to the modern tabloid, Variety, and were used in the entertainment trade to list bookings, provide information on name stars, build up interest in coming attractions, and advertise opera houses. Listings across the country were included; since most professional bookings originated in New York, including those of European stars, these publications provide invaluable, reasonably reliable data for this type of information.

The Principal Investigator had compiled further detailed information on Nebraska opera houses from various issues of Julius Cahn's Theatrical Guide, which were received on interlibrary loan. This data provided names of managers, proprietors, seating capacities, stage dimensions, etc. Due to wide variations noted between years, dimensions from this source should be considered approximations.

The Principal Investigator had divided Nebraska into seventeen geographic clusters to facilitate the surveying process; although these clusters were not always observed during the actual field work, they did allow an expeditious determination of routing and mileage.

Project Personnel

Responsibilities of the Principal Investigator included:

- [1] Composition of all written communications with field contacts to determine if a reported opera house of the 1867-1917 era is extant; name of owner or other individual able to grant permission for an on-site visit; other pertinent information relating to the history of the building.
- [2] On-site visits to all extant opera house buildings identified. On-site responsibilities of the Principal investigator included site mapping, both interior and exterior where applicable; determination of remaining theatrical integrity; measurements of theatrical dimensions; interviews with appropriate field

individuals, where appropriate; completion of pertinent sections of the Reconnaissance Survey Form; and maintenance of necessary field logs and lists of contacts.

- [3] Post-field responsibilities included completion of Historic Building Survey cards for NeSHPO; administrative details, including all financial records; specific directions or hand-drawn maps of sites, to facilitate HPD personnel with site location on plat maps; entry of all opera house data onto computer disks; and maintenance of files.
- [4] Overall assessment of extant sites, in cooperation with Joni Gilkerson, Architectural Historian for the NeSHPO, and recommendations for intensive-level studies (Preliminary Inventory).
- [5] Final report, including historic context, research design, priorities for future work including research questions, restatement of limitations and biases, and a bibliography.
- [6] Meeting all NeSHPO deadlines and attending and/or initiating all necessary meetings.

Responsibilities of the Photographer/Assistant

Investigator included:

- [1] Telephone conversations with appropriate individuals in the field to determine if an opera house of the 1867-1917 era is extant (where not previously determined by the Principal Investigator); name of owner or other

- individual able to grant permission for an on-site visit (where not previously determined by the Principal Investigator); and as much information as possible on the property to facilitate on-site visits, including:
- [a] address/description/directions; [b] current and possible previous uses; [c] exterior and interior status, including remodeling; [d] condition of stage and any scenery; and [3] >additional owner comments.
- [2] Logistics of on-site visits, including routing, amount of time allocated to each site, mileage; approximate arrival times at sites, and lodging.
 - [3] Photographs of all extant buildings, minimally two exterior shots at opposite 45 degree angles with wide angle lens. Photographs of interior details determined partially in consultation with Principal Investigator. Extant theatrical artifacts, primarily box offices, chairs, and scenery.
 - [4] Maintenance of a photographic field log, including identification of each roll of film by number in the first frame and complete record of each frame for descriptive purposes.
 - [5] Proper procedures for completion of photographic contact sheets.
 - [6] Assistance with necessary on-site measurements and other information.
 - [7] Attendance at and participation in the decision-making meeting following completion of field work.

Methodology

Pre-Field Research

Extantcy of the remaining 223 identified opera houses on the original list was determined through several processes. Since county historical societies had previously been contacted, librarians were next consulted, then letters were mailed to newspaper editors; and to postmasters explaining the information needed, asking them to forward another letter on to anyone in the community who might have the necessary information. Finally, telephone calls were made by the Assistant Investigator to determine status of former opera houses. A total of 510 individual structures, 160 of which remain extant, were identified, owing to two names given to some opera houses at different times.

Owners of the 160 opera houses, or representatives in cases where the structures are now owned by the towns or the owners are out of state, were first apprised of the study by mail, then were contacted to determine the condition of the premises. Of those, 8 were rejected as having had their second story opera house removed; 22 were rejected since alterations to both the interior and exterior were too extensive; and a further '14, although surveyed, fit into that category. Permission was secured and appointments set up to visit the inside of the opera house, where possible.

Names of centennial books and other publications were chronicled from Sylvia Nimmo's Nebraska Local History and Genealogy Reference Guide. A Guide to the Newspaper

Collection of the State Archives Nebraska State Historical Society (Diffendal 1977) was used to learn the names of newspapers for individual communities during the opera house era. These possible reference sources are listed under each pertinent county or community in the Principal Investigator's raw data records.

Reconnaissance Field Survey

Each extant opera house retaining its integrity was visited by the Investigators. All sites were photographed, mapped, and measured. Descriptions were recorded on field survey forms and a field log kept of travel and photographs. Photo logs are included in the appendix. Field survey forms and hand-drawn maps of the interiors and exteriors are on file with the Principal Investigator's records. Some maps were included on the site cards.

A copy of the reconnaissance survey form follows. Besides field data, historical data from centennial books, newspapers, Gazetteer and Cahn sources is included with each form. Field numbers were assigned, consisting of the month and date surveyed and the consecutive number of sites for each day. For example, the second property surveyed on March 8, 1987, would have a number 03-08-02.

A. IDENTIFICATION

- a. Field # _____ b. Historical Society _____
- c. Contact Person _____
- d. Historic Name(s) _____
- e. Current Name _____

B. LOCATION

- a. Address _____ B. Town _____ c. County _____
- d. Legal Description: Urban: Town/Add'n _____ Blk. _____ Lot(s) _____
- or _____
- e. Plat map _____
- f. Current Owner _____ Phone () _____
- Address _____

C. INDICATIONS

- a. Present use _____
- b. Public access: Yes _____ by Appt. _____ Tours _____ No _____ Comments _____
- c. Condition: Good _____ Deteriorated _____ Unaltered _____ Altered _____
- d. Type of building: One-story _____ Multi-story _____ Architectural comments _____
- e. Has building been moved? _____ Reason _____
- f. Original location _____

D. HISTORICAL DATA

- a. Period of Historic Importance/Dates of Operation _____
- b. Original owner _____ Dates _____
- Nativity _____ Occupation _____
- c. Significant subsequent opera house owners (indicate occupation, if known)
1. _____ Dates _____
2. _____ Dates _____
3. _____ Dates _____
- d. Important events and/or personages, if any, with associations with this opera house _____
- (attach addendum if significant number of touring companies appeared here)
- e. Other events besides itinerant entertainment _____
- f. Managers and years, if known _____

E. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Newspapers _____
- Publications _____
- Photographs _____
- Scrapbooks/Personal Memorabilia _____
- Other _____

F. ARCHITECTURAL DATA

- a. Date(s) of Construction _____
- b. Architect _____
- c. Builder _____
- d. Do architectural documents exist? _____ Availability _____
- Description _____
- Location (Possession) _____

e. FUNCTIONAL SYSTEM (P=Primary; S=Secondary; T=Tertiary)

1. Original use: P _____ S _____ T _____
2. Current use: P _____ S _____ T _____

f. TECHNICAL SYSTEMS

1. Exterior Foundation _____
- Walls _____ Wall Trim _____
- Roof _____ Decoration _____
- Width _____ Length _____ Stories _____ Height _____

g. FORMAL SYSTEMS

1. Significant interior rooms or spaces _____
- Stage Proscenium Width _____ Height _____ Curtain line to back _____ Apron _____
- Off R _____ Off L _____ Grid _____ Pinrail _____ Traps _____
- Backstage Dressing Rooms _____ Shop(s) _____
- House Main floor _____ Balcony _____ Other _____
- Box office _____ Control _____
2. Significant interior decorative features _____
- _____
3. Scenery (list, including present location) (use addendum if large number involved)
- _____
- _____
- _____
- Artifacts (list, including present location) (use addendum if large number involved)
- _____
- _____
- _____
4. Other noteworthy features _____
- _____

Form prepared by:

Name _____ D. Layne Ehlers _____

Address _____ 2302 South 11th _____

City _____ Lincoln _____ State NE Zip _____ 68502 _____

Phone _____ (402) 435-6946 _____ Date _____

☐ Currently on NRHP or in process

☐ Both interior and exterior integrity maintained to some extent; recommend intensive-level survey

☐ Interior integrity only

☐ Exterior integrity only

☐ Building has deteriorated and/or lost significant integrity. No action recommended.

Comments _____

Post-Field Activity

Within two weeks following each segment of the field survey, Nebraska Historic Buildings survey cards, provided by the Historic Preservation Office, were completed by the Principal Investigator. These cards were turned over to Joni Gilkerson for NeHBS site numbers and then returned to the Principal Investigator until the completion of the reconnaissance survey. After the completion of the preliminary inventory, all site cards were left with the Historic Preservation Office.

The Assistant Investigator compiled photo log records on floppy disks and recorded identification data on the backs of all contact sheets, as per NeSHPO specifications.

Preliminary Inventory

Due to the quantity of material, the preliminary inventory, including an overview and division of sites into categories, is included in a separate volume, Supplement A. These categories designate the condition of the building:

- [1] Recommend for Intensive Survey
- [2] Limited Integrity
- [3] Extensive Deterioration
- [4] Exterior Integrity Only
- [5] Other
- [6] Lack Integrity
- [7] Not Surveyed.

PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE WORK

**including
Research Questions**

Priorities for Future Work
Including Research Questions

Although an immense amount of research remains on all facets of Nebraska opera houses, the most pressing need is determination of eligibility for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places of the twenty-six sites designated at a meeting between the Investigators and Joni Gilkerson on Friday, June 12, 1987, as having retained sufficient historical integrity to merit intensive study. A thematic nomination of these properties will occur between July, 1987, and May, 1988. Actual nomination requires the owners' permission, but all properties will be determined eligible or overriding circumstances will be noted which would prevent eligibility. NRHP multiple-property nomination and individual property nominations will be prepared according to the specifics detailed in the extension to the original contract for the OHBIN Project. Target dates are provided in the extension as well.

The most pressing information required is deed research, procurable either from the owners or from the Registers of Deeds at the various county courthouses. A legal description and mini-abstract of the property must be compiled for each structure from inception to 1917. Microfilm research into local newspapers of the time will help in this preparation as well. Also, more data is needed on entertainment available in the various opera houses and

audience demographics are necessary as well. Besides local newspapers, the New York Dramatic Mirror and New York Clipper will be used for this process, as well as centennial books, theses, oral histories, and other pertinent sources. Eventually, a composite bibliography will be compiled of all sources.

Additional opera houses, located in Lincoln, Omaha, Nebraska City, Grand Island, York, Kearney, Beatrice, Plattsmouth, Fairbury, and Hastings, were large enough to draw quality professional entertainment on a regular basis, making them viable and important additions to a more rounded, accurate historical context. The Love-Larson Opera House in Fremont was also part of this circuit, but is already included as part of the nomination. Information on these opera houses must also be done as part of the work toward the historical context of the OHBIN Project.

One major hypothesis of this survey concerns the development of the opera house in conjunction with the arrival of the railroad to the towns, signaling a "coming of age" for each community. It is my contention that the arrival of the railroad triggered the need for an opera house. Certain unspecified sources must be consulted to prove this hypothesis; arrival dates of the railroad to each of these Nebraska communities are essential to establish the validity of this hypothesis.

Reasons behind the demise of the opera house as an institution must be verified as well. Possibilities are set out in the historic context of this Final Report.

Other goals and objectives for the OHBIN research during the next year, in addition to the above-detailed nomination process, include preparation of an oral presentation of research, including slides and handouts; an article for Nebraska History on some aspect of Nebraska opera houses; completion of the Principal Investigator's masters thesis on Nebraska opera houses; completion of the MidAmerica Theatre Conference's reference study on opera houses in the Midwest; participation in the conference sponsored by the Great Plains Institute at the University of Nebraska during the spring of 1988; and a possible book detailing Nebraska's opera house era.

Potential Research Questions

A number of questions suggest themselves based on the preliminary research done during the reconnaissance survey. These questions fall into three broad categories, the advent of the opera house, the function of the opera house, and the demise of the opera house. Answers to these questions are important to an understanding of the function of the institution known as the "opera house" and how it fit into its society during the era 1867-1917.

The Advent of the Opera House. How soon after the railroad arrived did the opera house open in each town? Did anyone connected with the railroad help fund the opera house? That is, did the railroad recognize the opera house as a valuable addition to the town? How much influence did the coming of the railroad have on the building of the opera

house? What factors determined when the opera house was built; i.e., how "civilized" was the town at the time the opera house was erected? Who determined that an opera house was needed; i.e., community demand or individual enterprise or some combination of the two? What type of people built the opera house? Who managed the opera house?

The Function of the Opera House. What qualifications did theatre managers have? Who did the bookings? How did they make their choices? What influenced those choices? How much of the social life in the towns revolved around the opera house? Who was in the audience; i.e., what were the community's demographics? What professional entertainment appeared in the opera house? What opinions did professionals hold of Nebraska? What circuits were regularly followed by professionals? What types of local entertainment took place in the opera house? What other activities used the opera house space? What other social activities and entertainments took place in town during the opera house era?

The Demise of the Opera House. What caused the opera house to cease its function as an important center of community life? How much influence did World War I have on the demise of the opera house? How much influence did motion pictures have on the demise of the opera house? What types of entertainment replaced the touring companies that had played the opera house? Where did nontheatrical social occasions take place after the opera house era?

LIMITATIONS and BIASES

Limitations and Biases

A major limitation designed into this study is that many of the best architectural examples of Nebraska opera houses, most of those which achieved national recognition, have been demolished in favor of steel, glass, and concrete. This is expected in any study involving architecture, particularly of public structures easily susceptible to fire due to structural materials, occupancy capacity, shortage of exits, and gaslights. A significant number of those structures remaining are there only due to the high cost of razing them. In most cases, survival was a matter of chance rather than a concentrated effort to save the building due to its cultural-historical significance. Along this line, even when the exterior integrity was maintained, many sites have no remaining interior historical integrity, eliminating their significance as extant Nebraska opera houses. The interior integrity is precedent in the case of opera houses.

At the onset of the reconnaissance survey, field time constraints were viewed as a possible limitation. This did not prove to be the case.

A further limitation accrued from the lack of similar experience of either Investigator. As was expected, competence increased throughout the course of the project for both Investigators. This limitation is not expected to hamper any results. Determination of those sites for intensive survey was easily achieved.

Weather was a slightly limiting factor. The exceptionally mild winter of 1986-87 allowed field work to progress at a much faster pace than originally expected. Only one field trip was cut short due to the weather; none were canceled. Field surveying extended only one weekend beyond the original target date of Memorial Day weekend.

While this reconnaissance survey was biased in favor of architectural data, this was not a vital concern. Since few individuals remain who were active teenagers or adults during the opera house era, and since comparatively few photographs are extant, the buildings themselves and written records from the newspapers of the day become the primary sources for establishing historical context.

Primary sources consulted have a strong local bias and exhibit the common nineteenth century partiality in reporting. Gazetteer and Cahn Theatrical Guide records, while not exempt from such biases, are compiled in such a way that data has an acceptable accuracy factor.

Another limitation is that the original list of opera houses was based on work done in 1978 by another researcher. It is assumed that no major opera houses were overlooked, but this limitation must be accepted due to time constraints. Also, there is the possibility that some opera houses which were reported as nonextant are still standing, since some field sources qualified their identifications to a limited degree. Based on the extensive reconnaissance-level survey, it is believed that all those retaining

significant historical integrity have been uncovered. A related limitation concerns the quality of information; this varies considerably according to the amount of interest and activity by individual local and county historical societies.

A final limitation inherent in a study of this scope is that it is impossible to research everything in one study. The 26 opera houses selected for intensive study are believed to provide an acceptable representative sample of the Nebraska opera house era, since all major categories of these theatres are represented among the proposed sites.

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APPENDIX

Opera Houses Surveyed

Identified by

County and City
Inside or Outside Integrity
Original Name
Current Owners & Contacts

OHBIN Survey Number

NeHPO Identification Number
Historic Preservation Office

Top = 160
 5/15 = 136/24 = 18%
 5/26 = 130/28 = 22%
 6/11 = 127/30 = 24%
 6/17 = 127/26 = 20%

Revised list 6/17/87

EXTANT OPERA HOUSES
 Identified by Owner and County

<u>County</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>Opera House & Owner</u>	<u>Surveyed</u>
Adams	Holstein outside (1)	Hargleroad Theatre now Green Onion Tavern (gutted; owners out of state)	05-16-08
Antelope	Neligh outside (2)	Neligh Auditorium Judy Eubank, 109 E. 5th, 402/887-4923	05-31-02
Boone	St. Edward outside (3)	St. Edward's Opera House Sharon Moore, Moore's Tavern 402/678-3366 (B) 678-2405 (H)	05-09-10
Box Butte	Alliance outside (4)	Phelan's Opera House Dan Dickenson, Syndicate Co., 2445 Valencia, Gering 69341	05-23-05
Boyd	Butte outside (5)	Butte Opera House Gene Soukup, 330 Thayer St., 775-2175	05-25-03
Brown	Long Pine inside (6)	The Palace City of Long Pine, Mayor's Office 273-4120	05-25-02
Buffalo	Miller Outside (7)	Abel Brothers Opera House Villae of Miller Bud Furry, Mayor 308/457-2281	04-11-08 BF06-15
	Elm Creek Outside (8)	Elm Creek Opera House Gibbons Grocery 308/856-4322 (B), 856-4470 (H)	04-11-07 BF02-30
	Shelton outside (9)	Meisner's/Hostetler Opera House Jack & Jill Contact: Irene Garrett, Shelton	05-16-04

Burt	Lyons Outside (10)	Harsin/Lyons Opera House Leland Going	04-04-04 BT04-45
	Oakland Outside (11)	Lund's Opera House Merlin Nelson, 505 E. 1st 685-5670	04-04-03 BT05-52
Butler 5/12 c.bk.	**David City inside (12)	Thorps Opera House (1889) Beth Klosterman, Route 1, 402/367-3209	11-09-01 Bu05-56
Cass	Louisville Outside (13)	Hasemeier's Opera House Storovich & Spencer, Good Times Bar, 402/234-9900	11-15-01 CC07-21
	Weeping Wtr Inside (14)	Philpot Opera House Tom & Gayle Meeske, Gambles	11-15-02 CC19-81
Cedar	Laurel outside (15)	Laurel Auditorium City of Laurel, City Utilities Ofc, 402/256-3112	05-30-02
	outside (16)	Laurel Opera House L. J. Mallatt (city mgr), 604 Oak 402/256-3112	05-30-03
Cherry	Valentine outside (17)	Quigley Opera House W. B. Quigley, 229 N. Main, 402/376-3001, 402/376-2386	05-24-06
	Wood Lake inside (18)	Wood Lake Opera House Village Board	05-25-01
Cheyenne	**Lodge Pole inside (19)	Lodge Pole Opera House (c.1910) Burton Bondegard 483-5366	05-22-03
Clay	Clay Ctr Inside (20)	Clay Center Opera House Howrd Brewster, 111 W. Sutton 762-3671 (H), 762-3518 (B)	04-26-02
	Sutton Outside (21)	Sutton Opera House Maurice Yost, 773-5506 Charles Spearman, 773-5323	04-26-01
	Fairfield Outside (23)	Columbia Opera House/ Orpheum Theatre Jim Engle	04-26-03
	Edgar Outside (24)	Edgar Opera House/Lyric Theatre Bill Kenley, 224-5136	04-26-04

Colfax 5/12 c.bk.	**Clarkson Inside (25)	Z.C.B.J. Opera House (1913/14) ZCJB Lodge, Libbie Krejsa, Sec. Clarkson	05-09-04
Cuming	West Point Inside (26)	The Auditorium City of West Point, 444 S. Main 402/372-2468	05-09-05
	Beemer Outside (27)	Beemer Opera House Robert Warde Kemper, 705 Blaine, 402/528-3460 (H), 528-3211 (B)	05-09-06
Custer	Broken Bow Inside (28)	Temple Theatre Cols. Wm. & L. D. Dainton 349 S. H St., 308/872-5143 (H), 872-5460 (B)	03-07-01 Cu05-30
Dawes	**Ft. Robinson inside (29)	Army Theatre (1904) State of Nebraska, F.R. State Park Thomas R. Buecker, curator 308/665-2852	05-23-06
	Chadron outside (30)	Nelson's/Chadron Opera House Marion Strumway	05-24-01
	**Chadron outside (31)	Pace Opera House (1917) Lowell Downs Down's Paint & Wallpaper	05-24-02
Dawson 5/18 c.bk.	**Cozad Inside (32)	Allen's Opera House (1906) James B. Frazier, 916 Ave. E 308/784-3212 or 784-2842	04-11-04 Ds02-19
	Gothenberg Outside (33)	Gem Theatre Robert Ollendorf, 1206 Ave. G	04-11-02 Ds06-27
	Farnam Inside (34)	LaBounty Opera House Orv Widick (not owner) 308/569-2524 (H), 569-2588 (B)	04-11-03 Ds05-3
	Overton Outside (35)	Priel's Opera House Bill Priel, 804 E, 308/987-2669	04-11-06 Ds08-19
	Lexington Inside (36)	Smith's Opera House Dick Helvey, 401 Cherokee Rd. 308/324-5224	04-11-05 Ds07-56
Dixon	Ponca Inside (37)	Ponca/New Opera House Robert & Philip Knerl, 100 E 3 755-2251	05-30-01

Dodge 5/18 c.bk.	**Fremont Inside (38)	Love-Larson Opera House (1888) Loell R. Jorgensen 1643 Nye Ave, 402/721-4515	01-24-06 DD05-3e
5/18 c.bk.	**Snyder Inside (39)	Schneider's Opera House (1900) Glen Durkschneider, RFD 568-2358	01-24-04 DD11-2
	Scribner Inside (40)	Scribner/Soll Bros. Opera House Lee Burkink, Lee's Market 402/664-3149 (c. 1898)	01-24-03 DD10-61
	Uehling Inside (41)	Uehling Opera House Andy Anderson, Box 181 567-2283	01-24-05 DD12-2
Douglas	Bennington Outside (42)	Bennington Opera House (Legion Hall; outside only) ASK Edna Mohr, 110 S. Allen 402/238-2141	04-04-02
	**Omaha Inside (43)	Creighton Orpheum Theatre (1895) City of Omaha (Terry Forsberg) 444-4750	04-04-01 D009 123-24
Fillmore	Exeter Inside (44)	The Auditorium Ray Hall, Hall Contracting, 266-4421	03-01-05 Fm03-32
	**Geneva Inside (45)	The Auditorium (1909) City of Geneva, 160 N. 9th 402/759-3109	03-14-01 Fm05-65
Franklin	Hildreth inside (46)	The Ramona Opera House Calvin & Doug Fritz, 249 Commercial, 308/938-3835	05-16-06
	Riverton Inside (47)	Riverton Opera House Wilma Brown, Brown Hardware 402/746-3647	03-27-03 FR07-21
Frontier	Maywood Inside (48)	Perkin Opera House Mark Shirley 308/362-4800 (B), 362-4230 (H)	03-29-01
Furnas	Arapahoe Inside (49)	Arapahoe Opera House F.D.I.C. Omaha ASK Weldon d'Allemand, Arapahoe 308/962-5236	03-27-05 Fn01-61
Gage	Cortland Outside (50)	M.W.A. Opera House Mrs. Lila Mapke, 102 S. Vermont 402/798-7748 (H), 798-7744 (B)	02-21-02 Ga06-2

Garden	Oshkosh inside (51)	Oshkosh Opera House Historical Society Eldon Drown, curator 308/772-3185	05-22-02
Grant	Hyannis inside (52)	Hyannis Opera House ASK Dan Manning or Opal Bilstein Hyannis 458-2377 or 458-2226	05-22-01
Greeley	Scotia Outside (53)	Daudt Opera House Ellen Lincoln	03-07-05 6y05-3
	Wolbach Inside (54)	McIntyre Opera House (1903) Steve Grossart 308/246-5595	03-07-06 6y07-1
	Outside (55)	Terry's Opera House Stuart Teter 308/246-5602	03-07-07 6y07-2
Hall	Grand Is. outside (56)	Bartenbach's Opera House now office & retail George Bartenbach, 308/382-7575	05-16-01
	(57) outside (gorgeous!)	Liederkrantz Hall (Turn Halle) ?Dinner theatre, 1st & Walnut Call Jane Cunningham 308/382-8370	05-16-02
	outside (58)	Michelson Theatre ?now Nathan Detroit's Rest. call Jane Cunningham	05-16-03
	Wood River Outside (59)	Moore's Opera House Bill Opp, Brass Rail 583-6708	02-07-01 HL08-11
Hamilton	Giltner Inside (60)	Giltner Aud./Opera House Town of Giltner, Mayor Donald Obermeier 402/849-2221 (H)	02-07-02 Hm02-19
no c.bk.	**Hampton Inside (61)	Hampton Opera House (1893) Laverne Klute, R. R. 2, 402/725-3274	02-07-03 Hm03-12
Harlan	Orleans Inside (62)	Orleans Opera House Harlan County H.S. Ernest & Winnie Kuhl, officers	03-27-04 Hn04-1

Hitchcock	Culbertson Outside (63)	Cole's Opera House Cliffort Clapp Jr., Rt 3 308/345-7875	03-27-06
	Palisade Outside (64)	Palace Grand Theatre Floyd Nelson, Nelson's Feed & produce, 308/285-3320	03-27-07
Holt	Page outside (65)	Page Opera House Rick Hammer 338-5908/338-5522	05-25-04
Howard	Boelus Inside (66)	Boelus Opera House Village, Gene Whitefoot clerk Box 207, 308/996-4250 (H), 996-4237 (B)	03-07-09 Hw01-12
	Elba Outside (67)	Elba Opera House Elba Chamber of Commerce	03-07-04 Hw06-18
	St. Paul Inside (68)	St. Paul's Opera House American Legion, 918 Baxter 308/754-5497	03-07-08 Hw11-157
Jefferson 5/20 c.bk.	**Diller Inside (69)	Anna C. Diller Opera House Clay Vaughn, Jr., Endicott 402/729-5636 (1912)	02-21-04 Jf02-01
	Fairbury Inside (70)	Majestic Theatre Mrs. R. L. Riggins, 910 20th	02-21-06 Jf04-66
	Outside (71)	Steele Opera House Barber's Furniture 729-3240	02-21-05 Jf04-65
Johnson 5/20 c.bk.	**Tecumseh Inside (72)	Tecumseh Opera House (1880) Densel Faulkhauser, 371 High St. 402/335-2934 (H), 335-3375 (W)	11-29-01 Jo07-53
Kearney	Minden outside (73)	Hostetler's/Schaper's O.H. ASK Grace Pedley, Minden 832-2793	05-16-05
	Norman outside (74)	Norman Opera House Mrs. Myrtle Fleming 756-0661	05-16-07

Knox	Crofton Outside (75)	Crofton Opera House Bill Sawantzke	05-30-04
	**Bloomfield Inside (76)	Pospisil Theatre (pre-1908) Larence R. Murphy, 1205 Walnut Yankton, SD	05-30-05
	**Verdigre (77)	Z.C.B.J. Opera House (1903) Mr. Jim Maly, Lion's Club Maly's Corner Grocery 402/668-2644	05-30-06
Lincoln	N Platte Inside (78)	Keith Theatre James Kirkman, Mayor 315 S. Oak, 308/532-5181	04-11-01 Ln06-72
	Wallace Outside (79)	Wallace Opera House Mayor of Wallace	03-29-02 Ln09-7
Lancaster	Hickman Inside (80)	The Auditorium Dennis Heckman, 320 E. 2nd 402/792-2313	02-21-01 LL09-03
Madison	Madison Outside (81)	Heins Opera House Jake Cox, 600 Norfolk Ave Larry Cahoy, 135 Green Garden Dr 402/454-2561	05-09-09
	(82) Outside	Stuart's Opera House Bank of Madison, 402/454-3381	05-09-08
	Tilden Inside (83)	New Opera House Bud Greene, Thriftway 368-5310	05-31-01
Merrick 5/20 c.bk.	**Central City Inside (84)	Martha Ellen Auditorium (?) Catherine Blodgett 1903 14th Ave., 308-946-2549	02-07-04 Mk02-8
Nemaha 5/20 c.bk.	**Auburn Inside (85)	Maclay/New Opera House (1890) R. W. Hemmingsens, 702 17th 402/274-3067 (B)	11-29-02 NH01-45
	Brownville Outside (86)	Opelt Opera House Harold & Sandy Davis 402/825-4131, 825-4411	11-29-03 NH03-73

Nuckolls	**Lawrence Inside (87)	Lawrence Opera House (1901) Jack Hlavac 756-7373 (B), 756-7023 (H)	04-26-05
	Superior Outside (88)	Superior Opera House Robert E. Noren, Superior Manor 402/879-3640	03-27-01 Nu13-4
Otoe	Talmadge Inside (89)	Cash's/Arends Opera House Isabella Winton, 419 N. 17 873-5800	11-15-07 OT11-60
	Lorton Outside (90)	Damme's Opera House Theo Damme, Denver 303/399-1547	11-09-06 OT05-1
	Neb City Outside (91)	Hawke's O.H./Standard Theatre A. M. Stephenson, 1606 Central 873-7034	11-15-05 OT-06-2a
	**Dunbar Inside (92)	Review Opera House Gene Hobbie, 259-3750	11-15-04 OT03-2
Pawnee	**Steinauer Inside (93)	Steinauer Opera House (?) Bank of Steinauer 869-2211	02-21-03 Pw07-8
	**Table Rock Inside (94)	Table Rock Opera House (1893) Table Rock Historical Society Nettie Stehlik 402/839-6485	11-29-05 Pw08-17
Phelps	Holdrege Outside (95)	Holdrege Opera House Jim Collison, Box 406	04-11-09 PP04-5
Pierce	Plainview Outside (96)	Plainview Opera House Melvin Rasmussen, Box 775 582-3523 (H), 582-3223 (B) Dan Ashburn, Box 609 582-3410 (H), 582-4712 (B)	05-30-07
Platte	Columbus Outside (97)	Pawnee Theatre Gary Brazeal, 304 Pershing Rd 564-8401 bicycle shop, o.s. only ground floor; front altered too	05-09-02

Polk	Osceola Inside (98)	Monson/Morrison's Opera House Bill Peterson, 830 N. Nance 747-7201 (B), 747-6921 (H) (1894)	11-09-03 Pk01-3
	Inside (99)	Osceola Auditorium Bill Zedicher, 660 Mickey 747-4861	11-09-04 Pk01-2
	Shelby Inside (100)	Rathbun Opera House Bill Morgan 527-5831 (B), 527-5654 (H)	11-09-02 Pk03-01
	Stromsburg Outside (101)	Stromsburg Opera House City of Stromsburg 764-2561	11-09-05 Pk04-05
Richardson	**Falls City Inside (102)	Gehling's Theatre (1892) Mr. Kiekhaefer 402/245-2725	11-29-04 Rh03-76
Saline	**Friend Inside (103)	Warren's Opera House (c. 1886) Wayne Yokel, 709 Pine St. 402/947-4881	02-21-07 Sa04-34
Saunders	Weston Inside (104)	Kovanda's Opera House Mike Hrdlicka 402/642-5471	01-24-02 SD18-27
	Ashland Outside (105)	Sears' Opera House Mr. & Mrs. Ron Vosler 1435 Silver 402/944-3421	01-24-01 SD01-78
Scottsbluff	Scottsbluff outside (106)	Marquis Opera House Bill Tallman, 1601 Broadway 308/632-6662	05-23-01
	outside (107)	Queen's Theatre now Elks Lodge Fred Ruff 308/632-7559	05-23-02
	Mitchell inside (108)	Mitchell Opera House Ona Joy, 1357 13th St. 308/623-1460	05-23-03
	Morrill inside (109)	Morrill Opera House Masonic Lodge	05-23-04
Seward	Milford Outside (110)	Milford Opera House Robert L. Rediger, 616 8th St. 402/761-2350 (H), 761-2411 (B)	03-01-01 Sw06-48

Sheridan	Hay Springs inside (111)	Civic Center School District #3 308/638-4434	05-24-03
	Rushville outside (112)	Pfister's Opera House Ted & Eleanor Clark 117 N. Main, 308/327-3175	05-24-04
	**Rushville inside (113)	Plains Theatre (?) Rev. James Daniels, 178 Cornell 308/282-1250	05-24-05
Sherman	Ashton Inside (114)	Ashton Opera House Gene & Glora Roach, R & R Bar 308/738-2319	03-07-03 Sm01-57
	Loup City Outside (115)	Gem Theatre Harold & Georgia Dorsey 745-1577	03-07-02 Sm04-143
Stanton	Pilger Outside (116)	Matheson Building Olga Christensen,	05-09-07
Thayer	Carlton Inside (117)	The Auditorium school gymnasium Vaughn Hinrichs, Pres. Sch. Board 402/356-4021	03-14-03 TY05-1
	Bruning Outside (118)	Bruning Opera House Village Mayor Lloyd Bartels 402/353-2835	03-14-02 TY03-01
	Alexandria Inside (119)	DeMerritt's Opera House Earl & Glen Bohlen 402/749-3860	03-14-04 TY01-2
	Hubbell Inside (120)	Hubbell Opera House Mrs. Carl Stradley 324-4135	03-14-05 TY11-1
Thurston	Walthill Outside (121)	Walthill Opera House Dale Benter, Walthill 402/846-5855	04-04-05
	Fender Outside (122)	Weiser/Warrington Opera House Armed & Vera Meierdierks 402/385-3262 (H) 385-3015 (B)	04-04-06

Webster	**Bladen Inside (123)	IOOF Hall & Opera House (1913) Phil/Judy Bond, O.H. Assn. 756-1261	04-26-06
	Red Cloud Inside (124)	Red Cloud Opera House Frank Morhart, #3 Oakhurst Pl. Santa Rosa CA ARRANGE WITH Ernest Wescoat Coast to Coast 402/746-3600	03-27-02 WT07-31
York	**Gresham Inside (125)	Clem's Opera House (?) Floyd Tonniges, Rt. 1 402/735-7543	03-01-02
	McCool Jct Inside (126)	McCool Opera House Mrs. Greg Esterling	03-01-04
	York Outside (127)	Nobe's/York Opera House Larry Klingsporn, 402/362-4126	03-01-03 Yk11-11